The Whisper Labyrinth

The further your intrepid narrator explored Carcosa, the stranger the environments he discovered. I discovered, that is. Beyond the ballroom itself, the palace's halls grew increasingly labyrinthine. No passageway seemed to lead in a straight path toward any particular goal. The chambers, once brightly lit and spacious, grew dark and dusty and cramped. After a short time, I realized that I had no idea how to return to the curious party I had witnessed previously.

As I came to this unfortunate realization, I noticed that the walls of this maze came to be covered in shelves. Each shelf had a glass bottle upon it, no two of which were alike in shape or design. Examining a few, I found that each bore a name of a specific individual. somehow I knew that this place was an oracle of sorts: if I could find the vessel that bore my name, then I would learn of my own future. I attempted to unstopper several of the bottles with other individual's names, but the corks would not comply.

After several such attempts, I became aware of the presence of an enormous lurking beast approaching in the labyrinth. I could not see any threat, yet I could hear its low, echoing growl and feel its hot breath on the wind. I quickly moved on, not wishing to remain in the Whisper Labyrinth long enough for the beast's stealthy tread reached my location.

Dear reader, I suggest that you should do likewise, before the unseen predator reaches you as well.

Important: If you wish to explore the Whisper Labyrinth, consult a GM.

The Grand Ballroom

The central chamber of Carcosa's palace was an enormous ballroom, where a curious party seemed to occur. The ballroom, indeed the palace as a whole, was decorated in an archaic and unusual style. It seemed to evoke the architecture of prior centuries while never quite falling into any school of design of which I was aware.

Dominated by a enormous balcony, the Grand Ballroom was the first confirmation that I had that I was no longer on our humble planet Earth. The night sky beyond appears to be permanently twilit and, stranger still, two moons hang in the sky. Even as the hours passed, the moons never seemed to dip any closer to the horizon.

I could hear the music and chatter of party guests coming from throughout the palace. Yet everywhere that I turned, no guests were in evidence. At first it seemed as if I had accidentally wandered into a room empty by pure chance, and that the real party was going on in the room beyond. But as I pursued the sounds of laughter from the guests, I continued to find rooms devoid of guests. Each room was filled with the evidence of a party underway. Drinks and half-eaten snacks scattered throughout. Personal effects were laid aside casually, as if the owners had stepped away for merely a moment. Music echoed from nearby halls, but never from the room I was present in. At times it seemed almost as if the elusive guests were right behind me, that simply turning my head would bring them into view. Yet try as I may, my searches for the revelers were fruitless. Or nearly fruitless, anyway.

The Shores of Lake Hali

Though I always wished to be a brave and resolute investigative reporter, the truth is that I have never been a brave man. Fear of failure is, perhaps, the reason why I chose the safe and easy path of the traveling salesman over the uncertain, dangerous path of the war correspondent. My attempts to seek solace in mundanity have utterly failed, though, as I now find myself in a land comprised primarily of the eldritch and the unsettling. Each corner in which I look is filled with the bizarre, the dangerous and the unholy.

This strange beach is no exception. The lake's waves change in composition when one isn't looking. Sometimes the lake is deep black water, too dark for eyes to penetrate. At other times, though, the waters are replaced with a sickly yellow mist that crashes upon the shore just as waves of water would. The lake itself is similarly transitory: sometimes the opposite shore is distant, too distant to see. Other times it seems almost close enough that you could speak clearly to those on the opposite shore. The far shore is most often desolate, devoid of signs of life. On occasion, though, a palace can be seen on the opposite shore, a near perfect mirror image of the Palace of Yhtill. Yet this palace looks abandoned. No people or lights can be seen within. Its gates have fallen from their hinges. Its flags are ragged yellow tatters. Whose palace is this? Could it be the Palace of Yhtill in the future, and omen of things to come?

These changes are worrying and impossible, as are so many of the events I have witnessed since entering Carcosa. And yet, for some reason, I feel more at home here than elsewhere. If I were to settle down I would, I believe, choose to set up shop here, on the beach and sell my wares to any citizens that passed on their way to the palace. In my spare moments, I could watch the cloud waves break on the shore and spy upon the empty palace, seeking any sign of life.

The Torture Chamber

At one time, I had dreamt of becoming Mark Roark, intrepid war correspondent. I wished like so many of my generation to make my fortune covering the atrocities of the great Franco-Prussian War, perhaps following the American Federation troops as they marched into battle in the People's Republic of Uqbar. But before your humble narrator could land a job, Tlon surrendered and the War ended as suddenly as it had began. No heroic globetrotting journalist, I. And so I settled for a life as a novelty goods broker, never expecting to see the atrocities of war firsthand.

Once I arrived in Carcosa, though, this belief was proven mistaken. Here, on an alien world, I saw torture chambers most terrifying. These chambers included machines and devices of disconcerting purpose. Chief among these were the creation of pain and suffering, and by my estimation these devices received a good amount of use in their time. Lucky was I to not have been the target of their villainous craft. Merely an observer as the chamber lay idle, I nonetheless was overcome with fear at the thought of the myriad needles, knives, clamps and screws being applied to the human form.

Stranger devices than these also occupied the torture pit. A thoroughly modern traveler of the 1930s, I was unable to identify many of the more technological devices herein. It was said in whispers that Queen Cassilda or the High Priest Naotalba had utilized this vile chamber to modify the mind of entrapped men and women. With the proper application, it was said, the devices could remove men's memories and/or implant new memories or beliefs. I found these stories quite implausible. Surely, if I had seen any evidence of memory erasure, I would remember such a thing.

The Hidden Shrine

I am a simple traveling salesman, imprisoned through unknowable means within an otherworldly dream-palace. I do not fully understand this place's politics, its religion or its culture. From my brief sojourns into this place, I have learned that the kingdom is currently experiencing some political troubles. As I understand it, the official state religion worships the "Great old ones", apparently a pantheon of some sort of pagan gods. But an illegal cult was spreading like a virus through the city, despite the efforts of the state sanctions religion. This new group worshipped a being called "The King in Yellow" and his gospel was a banned book - apparently the same obscure play that I read shortly before finding myself in this strange place. The government has gone to great lengths to wipe out this underground cult, yet its numbers seem to grow ever more. Personally, I have little time for religious disputes (having myself found and lost religion once already), so these conflicts, though deadly serious to the inhabitants, mattered little to myself.

In a forgotten, obscure corner of the palace itself, I discovered something most unexpected. A chamber apparently a shrine of sorts - devoted to these forbidden practices sat unknown beneath the very nose of Carcosa's ruling party. Within, one saw icons and statues of this prophesied King in Yellow's arrival, banners bedecked in the living god's Yellows Sign, and a single page of their forbidden holy book. Clearly, some person or persons within Carcosa's royal palace was secretly devoted to the outlaw religion. By the last decree of the late King Aldones, any discovered to worship the King in Yellow must be tortured unto death. Who would risk such a punishment to construct this secret chapel? It must be one of the palace's unseen staff. Unless, that is, the heretic is one of the royal family itself...

The Empty Grave

While investigating Carcosa's many secrets, I - your intrepid reporter Mark Roark - stumbled upon one further mystery. Deep beneath the palace floors lies an ancient crypt, dedicated to the fallen kings of this disappearing land. It is a solemn, desolate place, filled to the brim with flittering shadows and gruesome statuary. I'm sure that Poe or Lovecraft or one of that lot would have loved it. For my part, it gave me the 'heebie-jeebies', as they say. If I wasn't a rational citizen of the New American Imperium, I would have believed that the eyes of the dead kings still watched as I sought ever elusive answers in this funereal setting. Unfortunately for your ever humble (also, handsome) narrator, all that the crypt held in store for him was additional questions.

Conscientious readers of these pages will recall that King Aldones of Carcosa had recently perished, throwing the kingdom's politics into shambles. But curiously, his tomb inside these passages contained no body. It was sealed as with the others, but this brave journalist was not deterred by mere bricks and mortar. As I write this, the crypt's walls have been sundered and their opening showed the tomb to be unoccupied. Now, the King clearly has died. (Poisoned, they say, though I shall not trust the hearsay and gossip of this place's natives). Yet no corpse is to be evidenced here. I ask you, gentle reader, if the king's corpse lay not here, then where does it reside?

Black Stars Rise

The space beyond this point no longer exists.

When you look to where it once was, you see only a sickly yellow void in which black stars shine.